

OUR PLAN 2022-2025



COUNCILLOR
GREG
BRACKENRIDGE
Chair of the
West Midlands
Fire and Rescue
Authority



PHIL
LOACH
Chief
Fire Officer

A very warm
welcome to
Our Plan

FOREWORD

Everything we do is connected by our vision. Our highly-trained staff aim to deliver the best fire, rescue and risk reduction services which have our communities at heart - helping them to stay safe and to thrive.

Shortly before the pandemic started, 11,000 people took part in our public consultation which helped us to identify and develop our Community Risk Management Plan (CRMP).

Our review of the responses to our consultation, combined with our own assessment of risks our communities might face, resulted in six strategic projects which you'll find summarised on page 12 and 13 or online [here](#).

All of these priorities will be complemented by our Digital and Data strategy, which will bring smarter ways of working across our service. You can find out more by searching 'CRMP' on our website.



On these pages we share our priorities for 2022-2025, which support our vision of 'Making the West Midlands safer, stronger and healthier'.

We're incredibly proud of how everyone at West Midlands Fire Service responded to meet the challenges of COVID-19.

We prioritised the health and wellbeing of our staff. This enabled them to keep delivering our core services and they remained ready, willing and able to provide a wide range of additional support for the most vulnerable members of our communities.

As we all transition to living with COVID, we're determined to build on valuable learning from the last two years. We transformed many of the ways we operate.

Technology meant that we could carry out 'virtual' Safe and Well visits to people's homes or safety audits of tall buildings.

We formed new partnerships and strengthened existing ones. These valuable collaborations with councils, our blue light colleagues and other organisations are the bedrock of the support we offer to the more vulnerable members of our communities.



OUR PLAN 2022-2025



FOREWORD continued

We're immensely proud that our 999 emergency response services are rated outstanding by our national inspectorate. We want to continue delivering all of our services to the highest standards, with a sharp focus on providing our communities with value for money.

So 'Our Plan' outlines our commitment to transformation and to continual improvements in efficiency and effectiveness. All for the benefit of the communities we protect and serve.

Our communities also benefit when our staff feel proud of where they work and everything they achieve - in a diverse, inclusive and non-discriminatory environment.

This is underpinned by the values we have developed, together, and our adoption of the new Core Code of Ethics for the fire and rescue sector.



In 2022 the West Midlands host the Commonwealth Games. We have a key role in ensuring the safety of our international guests.

We're also honoured to be hosting the United Kingdom Rescue Organisation's 'Festival of Rescue' a few weeks after the Games, in Birmingham. Firefighters from across the UK will display some of the specialist skills and equipment they use at emergencies. We very much hope to see you there!

We'll be working hard to ensure that both spectacles showcase the very best of what the West Midlands has to offer, whilst continuing to deliver our wide range of services that make our communities safer, stronger and healthier.

Councillor Greg Brackenridge, Chair of the West Midlands Fire and Rescue Authority and Phil Loach, Chief Fire Officer.



OUR PLAN 2022-2025



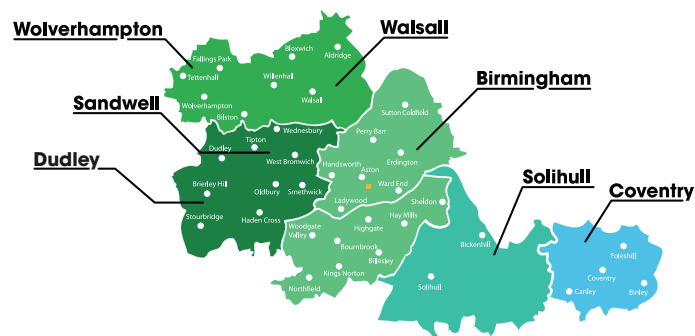
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INTRODUCTION

Our highly-trained staff aim to deliver the best fire, rescue and risk reduction services which have our communities at heart - helping them to stay safe and to thrive.

We are the second largest fire and rescue service in the country, serving an area of 900km² and covering seven local authority areas: Birmingham, Coventry, Dudley, Sandwell, Solihull, Walsall and Wolverhampton.



The West Midlands is home to a diverse and multi-cultural population of more than 2.9 million people, living in 1,149,000 homes. There are 101,000 non-domestic properties.

Everything we do is guided by our vision of 'Making the West Midlands safer, stronger and healthier'.



It includes areas with the highest risk in England outside of London, presenting a range of socio-economic and health and wellbeing challenges.

Through our community risk management planning, we assess risks our communities might face. It's the foundation of our three-year rolling strategy and priorities which, together, form 'Our Plan'.

Our Plan shapes how we deliver our services and how we locate and use our resources, to reduce risk and vulnerability.



> 2.9 million



1,149,000



101,000



NFCC
National Fire
Chiefs Council

The National Fire Chiefs Council is the professional voice of UK fire and rescue services.

As part of our commitment to the national fire agenda we host some of its support services, including its national data hub.

We play a key role in a number of its programme and projects, on emerging national themes.

OUR PLAN 2022-25: RESPONSE



Dealing excellently with incidents

Our emergency response services have been graded 'Outstanding' by Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary and Fire & Rescue Services.



Based on evidence and our knowledge of risk, we know that our five-minute attendance standard for serious incidents in high-risk areas saves lives, homes and businesses.

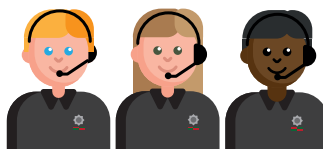


They protect lives and properties, keep businesses in business and help keep the West Midlands' transport networks flowing.

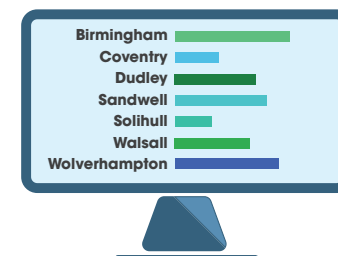


This also helps us plan where we need our people and resources including our fire stations, engines and more specialist resources.

Our professional, full-time firefighters respond assertively, effectively and safely to a wide variety of incidents, 24/7.



In turn, this gives us the capacity to deliver our equally important prevention and protection work with the West Midlands' most vulnerable.



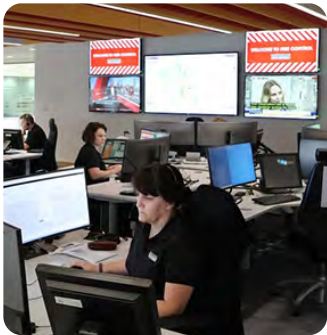
In 2021 /22 our Fire Control handled **44,521 calls**, in an average of **77 seconds per call**. Our fire crews attended **24,101 incidents** and arrived at the most serious in an average of just **4 minutes 41 seconds**.



OUR PLAN 2022-25: RESPONSE



Dealing excellently with incidents



We have an excellent track record of increasing public safety and working collaboratively with other agencies and organisations. We continue to work with partners, academics and health colleagues to carry out research to ensure our early response creates the best outcomes for our communities.

Further afield, we support the UK-wide emergency approach, through being a key part of the National Resilience arrangements. The skills and expertise of our staff can be called upon to help people in the UK or around the world who are affected by major incidents or humanitarian crises.

OUR STRATEGIC PRIORITIES

We will:

- respond with the resources you need when you need them to protect what matters to you, to save life, reduce harm and protect homes and businesses.
- be ready to respond in an assertive, effective and safe way to meet our vision and your expectations.
- lead rescue operations, working with others to help make you safer.
- be ready to respond locally, nationally and internationally.

OUR PLAN 2022-25: PREVENTION



Delivering interventions which support safer and healthier communities

Our prevention work aims to reduce people's vulnerability to the type of emergencies to which we respond.

Firefighters carry out thousands of 'Safe and Well' visits every year. They give advice to our more vulnerable residents to help reduce the risk of fire – to smokers or people living with dementia, for example - and can get them extra support if they need it.

Strong partnerships with colleagues and organisations in other sectors help us to identify and support people who are at higher risk from fires and other emergencies.



We carried out more than **36,600 'Safe and Well' visits** in 2021/22, of which **15,000 originated from partner referrals**. We also handed out **12,000 pieces of equipment** such as smoke alarms, hearing impaired alarms and fire-retardant bedding.



But our prevention work extends well beyond the home. We provide fire and road safety education to hundreds of schools and colleges and at our interactive 'Safeside' learning centre in Birmingham, as well as at public events and through our popular Fire Cadets programme.



Our WMFS volunteers support and add value to the delivery of many of these education programmes.

OUR PLAN 2022-25: PREVENTION



Delivering interventions which support safer and healthier communities



Our Fire Investigation team provides valuable information about the cause of fires. This helps us to ensure that we understand risks and target our resources effectively. Our highly regarded Fire Investigation team also supports other fire and rescue services.



Specialist prevention and partnership teams support our firefighters with building strong community links to reduce anti-social behaviour including arson.



We know that some of the most vulnerable road users are aged 17 to 29. That's why our firefighters and Road Casualty Reduction Team deliver key road safety messages to children and work with young drivers and passengers to help them understand the consequences of choices made at the wheel.



OUR STRATEGIC PRIORITIES

We will

- prevent fires, road traffic collisions and other emergencies
- focus on reducing health inequalities for our most vulnerable as a means of reducing risk and vulnerability to fires and other emergencies
- educate the community to reduce their risk and vulnerability to fires and other emergencies
- collaborate and work in partnership with other organisations to reduce the risk and vulnerability to fires and other emergencies.

OUR PLAN 2022-25: PROTECTION



Protecting life and property to make businesses stronger and communities safer

Our protection work is all about protecting life and property, making businesses and the economy stronger, and communities safer.



We also advise companies on fire safety legislation, to keep their staff and customers safe and help their businesses to grow.

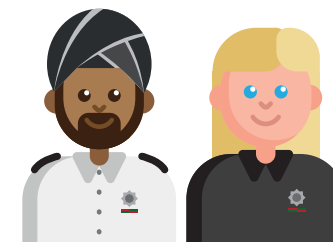


We inspect high-risk and tall buildings, including residential flats, hospitals, schools and vulnerable businesses, to keep safe and reassure the people who live and work there.



In 2021/22 we carried out **8,510 'Safe and Strong'** visits providing advice to businesses regarding fire prevention and protecting staff, buildings and contents.

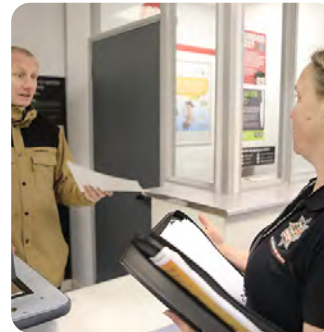
Our specialist fire safety officers are supported by our business safety advisors and firefighters.



OUR PLAN 2022-25: PROTECTION



Protecting life and property to make businesses stronger and communities safer



Our Business Support Vehicles help to bring down the number of unnecessary fire alarms and the disruption they cause. This is complemented by our staff in Fire Control using a system known as 'call challenge' to check whether or not we actually need to respond, or if it's a false alarm.



OUR STRATEGIC PRIORITIES

We will:

- protect you and your property by targeting high-risk buildings and vulnerable businesses
- make our communities safer by implementing the learning from independent and sector-led reviews
- improve community safety by developing innovative and smarter approaches to help keep your business in business
- promote economic growth through the development of sustainable solutions and education to support businesses
- reduce disruption to businesses and communities of the West Midlands

OUR PLAN 2022-2025



HOW DO WE DELIVER OUR STRATEGIC PRIORITIES?



Community Risk Reduction

Achieving excellent community outcomes by reducing risk and vulnerability through a proportionate response to all prevention, protection and operational activities.

Enabling Services

Providing effective and efficient systems as part of a sustainable ecosystem which supports our people and services to be excellent.



People

Working together to make WMFS a great place to work for our people for the benefit of our community.

Value

Deliver the maximum community benefit using the investment available to us.



OUR PLAN 2022-2025



COMMUNITY RISK MANAGEMENT PLAN PROJECTS

Our planning takes into account the views and needs of our communities, our partners and, of course, our staff. Some 11,000 people took part in our last public consultation.

Our research and data help us understand who's most at risk from fire and other incidents, and when and where they happen.

We gather evidence to help us better match our levels of response to different types of incidents.



More of the incidents to which we respond - or might in the future - are influenced by things like climate change or national projects such as the HS2 rail line, and so may need a specialist response.

The transformational projects outlined on the pages 12 and 13 resulted from our latest review of our Community Risk Management Plan, and will all be complemented by innovation and technology.

OUR PLAN 2022-2025



COMMUNITY RISK MANAGEMENT PLAN PROJECTS

Risk-based crewing of a blended fleet of vehicles

Many of the incidents to which we respond are of low risk - for example, a relatively minor traffic collision or outdoor fire - so we're reviewing how many firefighters we send to such incidents, what resources they use and new types of vehicles.



Automatic Fire Alarms (AFAs)

Many of the AFA activations to which we respond are false alarms, so we're looking at how we categorise and respond to them. We want to ensure we only respond to AFAs when necessary, so we're ready to respond to incidents that pose an immediate risk to life or property.



Emerging risks

The number and severity of incidents we attend are influenced by climate change, the threat of terrorism and big infrastructure projects, such as construction of the HS2 rail line. We need to be ready to respond to all foreseeable risks, which means improving our skills and resources plus partnerships with other organisations.



OUR PLAN 2022-2025



COMMUNITY RISK MANAGEMENT PLAN PROJECTS

Reducing health inequalities

There's an opportunity to enhance how we reduce risk in our communities. This includes tackling, at an early stage, the health factors which can increase someone's chances of being harmed by fire at home and other emergencies.



Dynamic mobilising

We can increase our understanding of what affects someone's chances of surviving an emergency. We already know that getting to serious incidents in five minutes can make a massive difference to the outcome. But we want to do more research, so we can better match our levels of response to different types of incidents.



EVERYTHING. CONNECTED.